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PLAIN JANE

PLAIN JANE

By

A. P. HERBERT

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T. FISHER UNWIN LTD

LONDON: BOUVERIE HOUSE, FLEET STREET

1927

PR
6015
.E58P6
1927

First published in 1927

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MADE AND PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY
BILLING AND SONS, LTD., GUILDFORD AND ESHER

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

MOST of these lyrics have appeared in *Punch*, six in the *Sketch*, and the drama at the end in the *London Mercury and Atlantic Monthly*. They are reprinted here with the courteous permission of these papers, for which I thank them.

A. P. H.

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I LIKE THEM FLUFFY

Some like them gentle and sweet,
Some like them haughty and proud,
Some of us like them petite,
And some of us love the whole crowd;
Some will insist upon grace,
And some make a point of the pelf,
But, to take a particular case,
I do like them fluffy myself:

I like them fluffy, I freely confess,
With fluffy blue eyes and a fluffy blue dress,
With fair fluffy hair, like Love-in-a-mist,
And lips that declare "I want to be kissed";
With fluffy soft cheeks, like plums on a wall,
With a fluffy soft heart—and no brains at all.

Some like a girl that's well-read,
Some like a shingle or crop,
But I don't care what's in her head,
If there's plenty of hair on the top.
Give me the frivolous locks,
Give me the Gaiety Queen,
Give me the Chocolate Box,
And give me the Girls' Magazine!

I like them fluffy—I know it's bad taste—
With fluffy soft looks and a flower at the waist,
With golden hair flying, like mist round the moon;
And lips that seem sighing, "You must kiss me soon,"
Not huffy, or stuffy, not tiny or tall,
But fluffy, just fluffy, with no brains at all.

Brains are all right in their place,
But oh, it's a shock to the heart
If the lady postpones an embrace
To enquire your opinions on Art!
And to-day, as I paused on the brink,
I own I was slightly annoyed
When she sighed and said, "What do you think
Of the basic assumptions of FREUD?"

"I like them fluffy," I gently replied,
"Not huffy, or stuffy, or puffy with pride,
With downy soft eyebrows and artful blue eyes,
The kind that the highbrows pretend to despise,
With fluffy complexions, like plums on a wall,
And fluffy opinions, and no brains at all."

THE PROLETARIAT

I WAS playing darts in the old *Blue Dragon*,
There was young Bert Baxter and a little friend of Jane's,
Harriet and Albert, that works on the railway,
And old Bill Mortimer that works upon the drains;
When up jumps a lunatic and starts a little chat,
And he calls us " Members of the Proletariat !"

Oh, we did *laugh !*
Oh, we did *laugh !*
Ha ! Ha ! Ha !
Well, it knocks a fellow flat !
And I said : " Well, boys, what d'you think of that ?
Fancy me a member of the Proletariat !
Fancy me and you,
And Harriet and Hugh,
All these years, boys, and, Lord, we never knew
We was all life-members of the Proletariat,
The Proly-oly-roly-poly-proly-tari-at !"

Well, I said, " Long words never lined a breadbox,
But a nice long word is a comfort, all the same;
You can say what you like about the language of Shakespeare,
But this here mouthful puts the man to shame.
For you do feel good, and there's no denying that,
If you speak about a plumber as the Proletariat !"

Oh, we did *laugh!*
Oh, we did *laugh!*
Ha! Ha! Ha!
Well, it knocks a fellow flat!
And Bill said, firm-like, he didn't mean to be
Not an economic pawn, nor a bond-slave—see?
So I held Nell's hand,
And we all felt grand,
And we give three cheers for to Socialise the Land,
And we took a season-ticket for the Proletariat,
The Proly-oly-roly-poly-proly-tari-at!

Then I went out, and I said to a policeman,
"Comrade, Wage-slave, ain't it very strange,
These here capitalists don't want to nationalise
The means of Production, Distribution, and Exchange?
If you ask me, Constable, I'm taking off my hat
To the Nancimancipation of the Proletariat!"

Oh, he did *laugh!*
Oh, he did *laugh!*
Ha! Ha! Ha!
Well, it knocks a fellow flat!
So he said, kind-like, "Come along of me!"
But I said, "What about Solidaritee?"
And Bill said "Shame!
Solidarity's the game!"
But he took me off to the station, just the same,
Though we're both life-members of the Proletariat,
The Proly-oly-roly-poly-proly-tari-at!

THE FIVE-O'CLOCK FAIRIES

At five o'clock and after,
  Down every City street,
You'll hear their elfin laughter,
  You'll hear the fairy feet.
Cheapside seems full of roses,
  The pavement rocks with fun,
As, powdering their noses,

From bank and shop they run——

Homeward, hurrah!
Go the Five-o'clock Fairies,
Hurrying, scurrying,
Home to Mamma.
What fairy red hats
And fairy pale faces,
What stockings and spats
And vanity cases!
London's in flower,
The Bank is a bower,
And constables bud to the best of their power,
While, since it's our duty
To venerate Beauty,
I take off my hat to the Five-o'clock Fairies.

Why are these dull photographers
In Lady Dash engrossed
When I know ten stenographers
Would leave her at the post?
A fig for your New Yorkers!

Your midinettes—pooh, pooh!
Madrid may hold some corkers—
Well, we have one or two.

Homeward, hooray!
Go the Five-o'clock Fairies,
Cantering, bantering,
Into the fray!
Fighting for trams
And battling for buses—
What jostles and jambs!
What fairy-like cusses!
Caught in the rain,

Crushed in the train,
Up at six-thirty to do it again,
Tough as they're tender,
They never surrender——
I take off my hat to the Five-o'clock Fairies.

You ladies rich and splendid,
If you have ever been
Locked in some space intended
For one not large sardine,
Give thanks you travel gaily,
Not as the fairies do,
Who fight their passage daily
From Cannon Street to Kew.

Homeward again
Go the Five-o'clock Fairies,
Wearily, drearily,
Into the train.
Jolly stockbrokers
Have got the last places,
And prosperous smokers
Blow smoke in our faces,

Rolling and reeling,
So faint we are feeling,
But stockbrokers never get out before Ealing.
And the same thing to-morrow—
To-morrow—to-morrow!
I take off my hat to the Five-o'clock Fairies.

SHE LOVES ME—SHE LOVES ME NOT——

HE.

SHE loves me? She loves me not?
It's very hard to say.
She loves me not this evening,
She loved me yesterday.
She loves me in the blue dress,
She hates me in the grey.
She loves me? She loves me not?
She loves me not . . .

I've been sitting here with Phyllis
Picking petals off the lilies—
Picking petals off the roses
In the good old way;
I've been sitting here since lunch
Wrecking roses by the bunch,
And I doubt if I proposes
For they all say "Nay!"

She loves me—she loves me not . . .
There's something in her eye,
Is it welcoming or warning?
Is it cynical or shy?
If I kissed her very gently
Would she cling or would she cry?
She loves me? She loves me not?
She loves me not . . .

SHE.

What's he thinking of, I wonder?
Have I made some fatal blunder?
Am I very, very boring?
Heaven only knows.
Should I be a little bolder?
Shall I turn the chilly shoulder?
Is he angry or adoring?
I shall ask this rose . . .

He loves me? He loves me not?
This booby of a man—
He loves me not? He loves me?
Is it me or is it Ann?
He loves me—will he kiss me?
If he wants to, well, he can.
He loves me? He loves me not?
He loves me not? He loves me!

HE.

Not a word. What is she thinking ?
Is it sentiment or shrinking ?
If a gentleman proposes
Will she faint with fright ?
Will she never, never utter ?
I'm about as brave as butter,
But I'll go on wrecking roses
Till it comes out right . . .

She loves me ? She loves me not ?
It's very hard to tell.
She loves me ? If I kissed her
Would she run and ring the bell ?
If I kissed her very gently,
Would she kiss me very well ?
She loves me ? She loves me not ?
She loves me not . . .

She loves *me !*

START HER ON CHAMPAGNE, BOY . . .

START her on champagne, boy, but break her in to hock—
That's the only rule of life that's steady as a rock.
I've seen so many promising entanglements decline
'Cos the lady weren't contented with a nice still wine.

Start her on champagne, boy, but break her in to hock;
And the longer you leave it the bigger is the shock.
I used to say to Liz,
" Now, what about some fizz ?
Or shall we have a nice glass of hock ?"
I told her the history, the mystery of hock,
I told her that hock would go sweetly with her frock,
How the felon at the block as a rule demanded hock,
And other things with which I needn't trouble 'ee;
And " Hock," said she, " would do very well for me";

And I said, "Waitah! a bottle of 53!"
And then, I don't know why—
Was it something in her eye?—
In a minute I'd be ordering the bubbly.

If a lady chooses lobster when there's plaice at one-and-ten
It's a strain upon the passions of the tenderest of men.
Give her dinner *à la carte* when your romance has just begun,
But if love is to be lasting stick to *table d'hôte*, my son.

Start her in the stalls, boy, but train her to

the pit;

Educate them up until they don't care where they sit.
I've done with Lizzie, boy,
For her tastes were too Savoy,
And mine were more Soho, I must admit.

I told her of the cooking and the quaintness of Soho,
I told her to Soho all the clever people go,
I told her that Soho was the haunt of the beau
And the beginning of innumerable marriages;
And "Soho!" she'd declare, "I'll be happy anywhere,"
And I'd say, "Splendid! Well, a bus goes there";

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And then, I don't know why—
Was it something in her eye?—
We'd be driving in a motor-cab to Claridge's.

MY OLD HOT-WATER-BOTTLE

No, Mr. Nibbs, I never thought of marriage—
At least, I never thought of it again;
It's not the institution I disparage,
It's just the thought of Woman gives me pain.

Give me my old hot-water-bottle,
And you can keep your wives.
Love comes and goes, as well I knows,
But this old pal survives.
A woman, so the poet sings,
Can raise the soul to better things;
And so she may, but all I say
Is, "Give me my old hot-water-bottle."

Early or late, when I come home she's waiting,
Early or late, she never says a word;

She never doubts the story I'm relating,
She never even asks me what occurred.

Give me my old hot-water-bottle,
Red flannel round it put,
And let it lie and gurgle by
My lonely little foot.
That's all the comfort that I want
When I've had too much crême de menthe—
A loving wife can shape one's life,
But give me my old hot-water-bottle.

My faithful friend, could you and I be parted ?
When I am gone, whose bottle will you be ?
Could I endure to know that you had started
Warming the toes of some detested she ?

Give me my old hot-water-bottle
Before I make my will,
And let me clasp at my last gasp
The good red flannel still ;
And when I reach my long last bed,
Strew no sad flowers o'er my head,
But, nice and neat, lay at my feet
Alice, my old hot-water-bottle.

SUSAN GOES SHOPPING

When Susan goes shopping
  There's joy in the town,
The weather is topping,
  The Bank-rate goes down;
Policemen, seraphic,
  Extend their blue arms,

Obstructing the traffic
To study her charms;
The prosiest grocer
Contrives to come closer,
The fishmongers yearn at their doors

The shopwalker rushes
To meet her and blushes
As soon as she enters the Stores.
And all of them say,
"Dear Moddam! Good-day!
Moddam! Moddam!
Beautiful Moddam!
What do you fancy to-day?
It's perfectly topping
To see you out shopping!
We've all kinds of raiment,
But don't think of payment—
Just take what you fancy away."

She's rather fastidious;
She tries on a shoe;
The first one is hideous,
The second won't do.
They ransack the cellar
And bring her some more,
Which seem to repel her
As much as before.
Till, lost in a litter
Of shoes that don't fit her,
And footwear enough for a ball,
She murmurs, "Don't worry;
There's really no hurry;
I don't want a shoe after all."

And all of them say,
"Sweet Moddam! Hooray!
Moddam! Moddam!
Beautiful Moddam!
We're anxious to meet your desires.

Please go on shopping,
Keep changing and chopping;
We've everything handy,
From buttons to brandy,
But what is it Moddam requires?"

She's not very certain—
They show her a cheese,
A hat and a curtain,
A jolly chemise,

And ribbons and laces,
And cloth by the mile.
Controlling their faces,
But failing to smile,
They clamber up ladders,
And, genial as adders,
Surround her with satin and silk,
Until she confesses,
"I've plenty of dresses,
But I *should* like a glass of hot milk."

And all of them say,
" Sweet Moddam ! Good-day !
Moddam ! Moddam !
Beautiful Moddam !
We wish you were stopping
A fortnight or two.
Pop in when you're popping,
Keep changing and chopping,
Go on till we're dropping,
We've nothing to do ;
But if these researches
Don't lead to a purchase,
We'd like to stop shopping,
Dear Moddam. Would you ?"

I WILL BE BOHEMIAN, I WILL . . .

I LIKE this party,
I do,
I feel so Arty,
Don't you ?
My, it's a wonderful sight,
So many people who write,

So many actors
And concert attractors—
I do feel Bohemian to-night!

And I will be Bohemian, I will!
I'll talk about Art till I'm ill;
On my stomach I'll lie
And discuss ROGER FRY—
I will be Bohemian, I will!

So this is Bohemia,
Old boy?
Is it nervous anæmia,
Or joy?
Who are the ladies who cook
Haddock and eggs in a nook?
What are they called,
And why are they bald,
And are they as odd as they look?

Make me Bohemian, I beg!
Give me a haddock and egg!
And what is the man
Who is using a fan,
And why does he stand on one leg?

Ain't the discussion
Bizarre?
Golly! How Russian
We are!

And Olga Popolga's divine,
And if she declines to be mine
I'll try to look Tchehov
And shatter the neck of
A bottle of strawberry wine.

For I will be Bohemian, I will!
I'll gobble up Life till I'm ill;
I'll double my ration
Of gaspers and Passion—
I will be Bohemian, I will!

No more Convention
For me!
I'll fearlessly mention
The flea.
And we'll have a studio too,
I'll whitewash the wallpaper blue,
And make no more strictures
On Futurist pictures,
Whatever the horrors you do;

But if you paint eyelashes green
I'll murmur, " I see what you mean,"
And express no surprise
At retangular thighs ;
I will be Bohemian, old bean!

Life is so jolly,
I think;
Let's plunge into Folly
And sink!

Turn on the gramophone, boys!
I'm rapidly losing my poise;
Try to avoid
The subject of FREUD,
And let's make a horrible noise!

I will be Bohemian, I swear!
I don't care a hang what I wear;
I'll take off my shoes
And dance in the mews
Till I meet a policeman—so there!

I do like this party,
I do!
But I don't feel so hearty—
Do you?

I think I am going to yawn;
I've eaten too much of that brawn;
I should have said
We were better in bed,
And I strongly object to the dawn.

I will be Bohemian, I swear!
But I should like a little fresh air;
I would not presume
To suggest there's a gloom,
But are we as gay as we were?

POOR MR. DAVENPORT

I've lost my job, George.
It's—a—shame!
I've lost my job, George;
All—the—same
I don't much care
If I never see again
That Mrs. Davenport,
She gives me a pain.

Well, there was I a-polishing
The rods on the stairs—
Up comes the creature,
And up she flares;
She lost her temper,
And I give warning,
All about *nothing*, George!
Oh, well, who cares?
But poor Mr. Davenport!
Lord, how he'll miss me
Now he can't kiss me
Every morning
On the stairs!

Well, there we are, George!
Burned—my—boats.
Jealousy's a thing, George,
Gets—girls'—goats.
Would you believe it?
The mean old tabby
Took my notice,
An' it do seem shabby.
Well, what's a kiss, George?
I can't see the harm.
What can you expect
When a girl's got charm?
But bang goes my income!
We can't get married, George,
Not for a long time—
George, will you mind?

And poor Mr. Davenport!
Lord, how he'll miss me,
Now he can't kiss me—
And he *was* so kind!

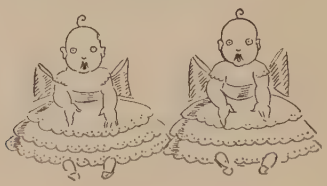
ONE OF THE BEST

I THINK I've done with Mabel Grey,
A perfect woman in her way;
With Mabel one can never say,
    But I believe I'm jilted.
I met her first on Folkestone pier,
The night was very far from clear,
And absent-mindedly, I fear,
    I wooed her, and she wilted;
Well, you'd have done the same that night,
The moon was very weird and white,
And had it been electric light
    Perhaps I'd not have tarried;

But Mabel is the sort that makes
The most of gentlemen's mistakes,
And then one day a fellow wakes
And finds that he is married.

Dear old Mabel—one of the best!
But no more Mabel for me!
Dogged, athletic, and strong as the sea
(And goodness, how strong a strong woman can be!)
Blessings on Mabel, and many times blest
Be the man who has stolen my Mabel from me!

I never had a fault to find
With Mabel; she was clean and kind,
But still she would improve my mind
And take me off to chapels;
She interfered with people's sins,
She'd set her heart on having twins,



She made me live on vitamins
And start the day with apples;
And so I told the constant hen
I could not marry her just then,
She said it did not matter when,
For she was used to waiting;
Nor did it matter where I went,
She patiently pursued the scent,
And took the fastest train, intent
On ultimately mating.

Dear old Mabel—one of the best!
But no more Mabel—Hooray!
Talk about goodness, she was good to me
(And goodness, how good a good woman can be!)
Blessings on Mabel, and who would have guessed
That somebody'd steal my sweet Mabel away?

I said, "Sweet Mabel, you're a saint,
But if you think I am, I ain't;
I ought to tell you that I paint
Young ladies in their undies;

I love the bottle, I confess,
My morals are a horrid mess,
And Brighton is my one address
On Saturdays and Sundays."

I said, " I doubt if we should suit,
I am a most disgusting brute."
She did not seem to care a hoot,
But told me in a letter
It long had been her girlish plan
To marry some abandoned man
And mould him as a woman can—
The worse I was the better.

Dear old Mabel—one of the best!
But no more Mabel for me!
A slave to hay-fever, but straight as a tree
(And goodness, how straight a straight woman can be!)
Mabel be blest, and an annual rest
To the man who has taken my Mabel from me!

And so I took a nobler line,
Behaving very pure and fine:
I gave up coffee, sweets, and wine,
And let old ladies bore me;

And lo ! the better I became
The lower burnt my Mabel's flame,
The less that Mabel saw to blame,
    The less did she adore me.
Instead, I think, she does adore
A very bad solicitor
Who likes his liquor more and more
    And never goes to chapels.
At any rate, she has a plan
To marry and reform the man
As only a good woman can—
    They say he's eating apples.

So here's to Mabel—barrels and bins—
    For it's no more Mabel for me !
  Earnest, intelligent, masculine she
  (*And goodness, how male a male woman can be !*)
Blessings on Mabel, and apples and twins
    To the man who has stolen my Mabel from me !

THE PEACH ON THE PILLION

RIDE on, pretty Percy! I'm clinging, I'm clinging!
I've needles and pins
From my skull to my shins,
There's dust in my eyes, but I'm singing, I'm singing,
I'm Helen, or someone, and you are my knight.
You've a peach on the pillion,
A girl in a million,
I'm clinging, I'm singing,
And Brighton's in sight!

Ride on, my brave Percy ! I'm aching, I'm breaking,
I haven't a bone
That feels quite like my own,
I've broke a suspender, my stocking is shocking—

I wonder just what that old gentleman said ?
My HECTOR, my hero,
My Notting Hill NERO,
I'm lashed to the saddle,
And Brighton's ahead !

Ride on, rapid Percy ! Go faster, go faster !
Look round—do you mind ?—
To make sure I'm behind,
But quicker ! the quicker, the sicker the Vicar,
He's waving, he's raving, the funny old dear !
Your face is vermilion,
But I'm on the pillion,
I'm clinging, I'm singing,
And Brighton is near !

WHAT'S THE GAME?

Night Thoughts on the Embankment

Yes, it's my birthday. And it's not the first
I've sat and wished that someone would explain
Why I was born and nourished up and nursed
Instead of dropped down some convenient drain.
Well, no one wants me, though a lot have tried,
My luck is out, my reputation's torn;
Nobody'd care a button if I died,
Yet what a fuss there was when I was born!

I was a beautiful baby,
And everyone crowded to see,
For everyone swore that no baby before
Had been quite such a baby as me.

But now I'm not wanted no more
Unless it's for scrubbing a floor,
And if that's what a person is for—
Well, what's the Big Idea?

I done my part in this depressing scene
And never grudged a drop of elbow-grease,
I've scrubbed my steps and left my dishes clean

And reckon I'm as good as the police ;
And when some beetle throws his weight about
I answers back with pardonable scorn:
" All right," I says, " my glamour's gone, no doubt,
But you should have seen the fuss when I was born!"

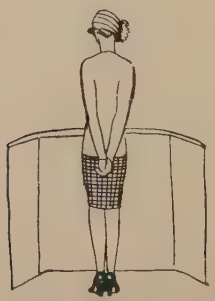
I was a beautiful baby,
The wonder of Paradise Row,
I was a lamb in my little blue pram
As I rode about sucking my toe.
The neighbours would stand in a queue
To hold me a minute or two—
But now I'm a blot on the view—
Well, what's the Big Idea?

I must have been a little beauty then.
Still, what did my poor mother want with me?
Well, I was number nine—or was it ten?—
So Father took her purse and went to sea,
And Uncle knocked him down and went to jail,
And Father died of jaundice off Cape Horn,
And Grandpa popped it when he heard the tale—
O dear, there was a fuss when I was born!

I was a wonderful baby,
And the prettiest bud on the bough,
I'd only to speak, and they'd laugh for a week,
But no one don't laugh at me now.
But if no one don't want me no more,
What for was I wanted before?
Well, what I mean, what am I for?
Oy! What's the game?

THE SURPRISING SONG OF THE KING'S COUNSEL

Now, Mrs. Green, attend to me,
For I'm Sir Buster Blow, K.C.
The question what
Is true or not
Is highly complicated,
And while I would not say that you
Have stated that which is not true,



It is my case
That what took place
Was not as you have stated.
Not that it matters, Ma'am, a lot
If what you've said was true or not,
For I've a knack
Of making black
Resemble white or yellow,
And in ten minutes, Ma'am, or less,
The Judge, the Jury and the Press
Will all decide
That you have lied
And I'm a clever fellow!

Blow! Blow! Sir Buster Blow!
Sir Buster Blow's a-blowing!

Nor hope with nimble repartee
To get the better, Ma'am, of me;

No woman yet
Contrived to get
Away with that, young lady !
Though I may call you any name
Don't think that you can do the same,
For I'm afraid
You are not paid
To show that I am shady.
But I have been retained to blast
Your future and expose your past,
A process which
Will make you itch
But move the Court to chuckles !
And if you falter, blush or blink,
The Jury will know what to think,
While if you try
A smart reply,
The Judge will rap your knuckles.

Blow ! Blow ! Sir Buster Blow !
Sir Buster Blow's a-blowing !

Now take your mind back, Mrs. Green.
Where were you, please, at 8.15
On Saturday
The 6th of May ?
And were you wearing knickers ?
And did you, Mrs. Green, or not
Spend Easter Monday in a yacht ?

And do you swear
The persons there
Consumed teetotal liquors ?
Would it be Friday then, or June ?
Who else went up in the balloon ?
Why did he fall ?
You can't recall ?
Well, that will suit me nicely.

You knew Lord Lavender, I think,
Who died not long ago of drink ?
You've never read
A book in bed ?
I thought as much. Precisely !

Blow ! Blow ! Sir Buster Blow !
Sir Buster Blow's a-blowing !

Now at the age of one or two
Were you discovered at the Zoo,
Abandoned in
A biscuit-tin
By your ungrateful mother ?

At any rate—I see you wince—
You have not seen your parents since,
But after that
Were nourished at
Some nunnery or other ?
Have you a mole behind the ear ?
Do you prefer thick soup or clear ?
And when you dine
Do you take wine,
Dear Mrs. Green, or water ?
I thought as much ! I knew the face.
My Lord, I must conclude the case—

Embrace me, dear !
My Lord, it's clear
The witness is my daughter !

Blow ! Blow ! Sir Buster Blow !
Sir Buster Blow's a-blowing !

STORIES

In the café or the club,
At the Palace or the pub,
You are sure to meet a genial soul
Who apparently devotes
All the day to anecdotes
And has very little self-control.

In a minute you'll have heard
About the Bishop and the Bird,

And the liner, and the Lord-knows-who,
And in very little more
You'll be thinking " What a bore !
I shall have to tell a story too."
But I never can recall
Any anecdote at all,
Whether drawing-room or otherwise,
So when anyone begins
" Have you heard about the twins . . . ?"
I delicately thus replies:

" Everybody tells me stories,
But I never know any stories,
So don't you tell me a story,
For I can't tell you a story,

I don't want to tell you a story,
You don't want me to tell you a story,
So if you don't tell me a story
Then everything is quite all right."

Nothing daunted, he proceeds
To enumerate the deeds
Of a gentleman who owns a Ford,
And continues with a short
But scandalous report
Of a very very well-known lord;

While I wonder in despair
What the witticisms were
That were whispered in my ear last night—
That extremely funny yarn
Of the Banker and the Barn ?
I remember little bits, not quite.
But at any rate I'll miss
Not a syllable of this,
And I listen as the children do.

Am I feeble in the head ?
By the time I go to bed
I have quite forgotten that one too.

Everybody tells me stories,
But I don't know any stories,
I don't want to hear good stories,
For I can't *remember good stories !*
I don't want you to tell me a story,
For I can't tell you a story,
But if you don't tell me a story,
Then everything is quite all right.

How I wish I had a brain
That was able to retain
All the captivating things one hears !
How I wonder who invents
All the spicy incidents
That are common in the lives of peers !
How I envy all the men
Who have heard about the hen
And can tell you how the Scotchman dined—
Though I very often tries
To pretend that I despise
This extraordinary kind of mind.
For you'll find that when a bloke
Always knows the latest joke
There is very little else he knows.
So I'd rather give the time
To the Cult of the Sublime,
And whenever he arrives I goes !

Everybody tells me stories,
But I never know any stories.
I'll shoot if you tell me a story,
For I'll have to tell you a story,
And I can't tell you a story,
And I don't want *to tell you a story!*
But if you don't tell me a story,
Then everything is quite all right.

COALS OF FIRE

"Well, Mrs. Rogers,
I hear you're taking lodgers—
And young enough, they say, to be your son.

Now Rogers is away, dear,
You're moping, I daresay, dear,
And company is pleasant if it's only just the one.

"No offence took,
I trust, where none intended?
Don't leap before you look;
Least said, the soonest mended.
And as to what the gentleman is paying,
Don't think it's any interest for me,
Still, I thought you'd like to know what some was saying,
So I thought I'd tell you what was said, you see."

"Thank you, Mrs. Bubble,
But spare yourself the trouble;
I'm sure it's very good of you to call,
And you not very well, dear,
It's difficult to tell, dear,
But are you quite the same since you had that nasty fall?

"No offence took,
I trust, where none intended?
Don't leap before you look;
Least said, the soonest mended.
But Alice said that you'd been hearing double
Since Bubble threw that hammer at your head;
Of course, I know she's very thick with Bubble,
But still, I thought I'd tell you what was said."

" Thank you, Mrs. Rogers,
But, speaking of the lodgers,
Do you mean to have another, dear, or not ?
That's what I should do, dear.
He'll be lonely, just with you, dear;
Though I'm sure it's very cosy with those nice new blinds you've got.

" No offence took,
I trust, where none intended ?
Don't leap before you look ;
Least said the soonest mended.
I'm sorry for the boy, and him in mourning,
Though Mabel don't believe the wife is dead ;
That Mabel says too much, I give you warning,
But still, I thought I'd tell you what she said."

" Thank you, Mrs. Bubble.
Now how about your trouble ?
Is Bubble backing losers just the same ?
You've lost a lot of hair, dear,
You ought to take more care, dear;
But there, he's dragged you down, dear—I don't say you're to blame.

" No offence took,
I trust, where none intended ?
Don't leap before you look ;
Least said the soonest mended.

You'll have a cup of tea ? I've got it handy.
I daresay it's a long time since your last.
Well, Mabel said you breakfasted on brandy,
And I'd better tell you what remarks is passed."

MARY THE MINX

EVERYBODY thinks
That Mary is a minx
(Whatever a minx may be),
She likes high jinks,
Wears blues and pinks,
And many people winks at we;
The young men tear
Their silly hair,
They get no share in she, Sir,
And I don't much mind
If she minx man-kind,
For she isn't a minx to me, Sir!

Everybody thinks
That Mary is a minx,
And many people shrinks
From Mary.

But one man's minx is another man's mate,
And here and now I hotly state,
If Mary is a minx
I'll stand you drinks
If you know a better minx
Than Mary.

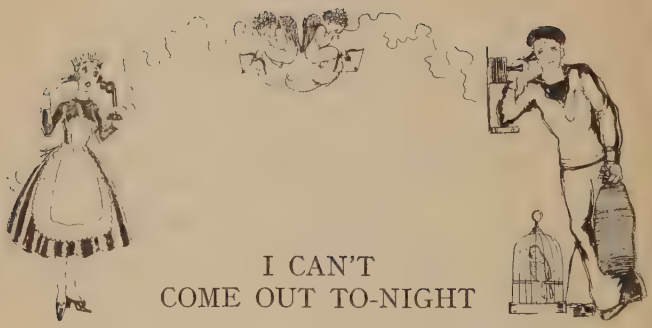
I have an Aunt
Who says I can't
This wild young plant control ;
My Uncle moans
" I *like* Miss Jones,
But, boy, she owns

no soul."
Well, you can keep
Your dreamers deep,

Your solemn sheep and Sphinxes !
There's not much wrong
With a minx as long
As a man don't mix his minxes !

Everybody thinks
That Mary is a minx,
And the parson shrinks
From Mary;
But half the Duchesses I know
Were minxes not so long ago,

And if Mary is a minx,
Then circulate the drinks
If you know a better minx
Than Mary.



I CAN'T COME OUT TO-NIGHT

18563 Euston ? Yes, that's right.
Is that you, Joe ?
I'm sorry, Joe, I can't come out to-night.
Hullo ? Hullo ?
I can't come out, my dear,
They've got a party here . . .
Won't let me go . . .
What's that ? I know.
Hullo ? Hullo ?
I told her you was sailing in the morning,
I tell you, Joe, I nearly give her warning . . .
But there it is—I thought I'd telephone . . .
You'll have to go to Lovers' Lane alone . . .
Hullo ? Hullo ?
I'm sorry, Joe.
I can't come out to-night.

Well, I suppose that this must be Good bye . . .
It seems a shame . . .
I tell you, Joe, I've had a good old cry . . .

But, all the same,
She's in the right, no doubt,
It's not my evening out
(Three minutes more ?
Yes. Make it four).
Hullo ? Hullo ?
Well, such is life. What must be, must, I say.
This time to-morrow you'll be far away.
I only hope you'll have a pleasant trip,
I'm glad there aren't no women on the ship . .
Hullo ? Hullo ?
It's no good, Joe.
I can't come out to-night.

Well, think of me, Joe, washing pans and such . . .
Think of me, Joe.
Send me a wireless, if it's not too much . . .
Hullo? Hullo?
And if you stop at Spain,
Think all the girls are plain,

And tell them straight
You're keen on Kate . . .
Hullo? Hullo?
You will take care with them Australians, Joe?
They are a bad, designing lot, I know.

Write to me, Joe, and don't you tell me whoppers . . .
Three minutes more? No, I've got no more coppers . . .
Hullo? Hullo?
Good-bye, my Joe.
God bless you, Joe. Good-night.

DON'T LOOK AT US!

THE SONG OF THE SHRINKING CHORUS.

DEAR Ladies and Gentlemen, *don't* look at us!
We shrink from attention, we deprecate fuss.
We're paid to expose to the popular eye
Our faces and forms, and we have to comply.
But we know we look sights
In these heliotrope tights,
And, apart from the tights, we are shy;
So, although we are waving our legs in the air,
You'll kindly oblige us by looking elsewhere.

Don't look at us!
We are so shy.
Be generous,
And hide your eye.
Ignore, we beg, the shapely leg
We coyly kick before us.
We do it just because we must—
We are the Shrinking Chorus.

We come from the Country, the daughters of Squires,
We'd love to be living like mice in the Shires,
And nothing but poverty, hard to endure,
Could have driven us into the limelight, be sure,

For, try as we may
To look naughty and gay,
In fact we're fatiguing and pure,
And the rose in our cheeks as towards you we rush,
Isn't paint, as you think, but a maidenly blush.

Don't look at us!
And do not think
We're amorous
Because we wink.
We don't want notes from giddy goats—
In point of fact they bore us;
We cannot bear the manly stare—
We are the Shrinking Chorus.

Young noblemen, do not believe all you hear!
It is *not* our ambition to marry a Peer.
So don't ask us out at the end of the show,
Our mothers are sitting up waiting, you know.
An occasional present
Of flowers is pleasant,
But orchids *embarrass* us so.
Nor should we be plied with unsuitable liquors,
For two of our number are married to Vicars.

Don't look at us!
Our labours done,
We catch the bus
To Kensington.
We should be bored if any lord
Attempted to adore us;
We are the girls who don't want pearls—
We are the Shrinking Chorus.

THE LUCKY BABY

My father went off with a gypsy,
Had seventeen children and died;
My mother was touchy and tipsy,
But I was her joy and her pride;
And many's the penny I've brought her
Down Ascot and Newmarket way—
She'd hold up her seventeenth daughter
To the lords and the ladies, and say:

" Spare a copper for the Lucky Baby,
Lucky Elizabeth Maud !

She'll bring you such luck, sir,
You never have struck, sir,
Health, winners, and travel abroad.
Hold up, Lucky Liz, show his lordship your phiz—
How's that for a fortunate face?
The last and the luckiest,
Prettiest, pluckiest,
Lucky Elizabeth Grace!"

My face was my fortune, she told me,
And that's all the fortune I've seen;
I loved a young man, but he sold me,
And I married the next at eighteen.
Well, one thing leads on to another,
My husband has left me again,
And now I'm a happy young mother,
At Epsom you'll hear me complain:

"Throw out your coppers for the Lucky Baby,
Lucky Elizabeth Loo!
You couldn't refuse her,
You won't have a loser—

Milord, you've a lucky face too.
Hold up, Lucky Rose, show the lady your nose;
Now ain't that a fortunate eye?
The first one is lucky,
They say, don't they, ducky?
God bless you, milady—good-bye!"

"Spare a copper for the Lucky Baby,
And blessings shall be your reward.
She's a regular fairy,
Brought luck to Queen Mary,
Health and wealth to the motherless lord.
Who sent the kind stork to the Duchess of York,
And cured our dear Prince of his pain?
Well, you ask the Prince
If he's had the croup since
He was good to Elizabeth Jane!"

SATURDAY NIGHT

It's Saturday night, and I'm feeling all reckless;
I'll stand you a cider, I'll buy you a necklace;
We'll go to the pictures and settle down snugly;
You be my Mary and I'll be your Dougly.

I feel so bright
On a Saturday night,
I want to jump over the moon ;

I want to change hats
With a lady, and that's
A sign there'll be trouble quite soon.
Douggie, my boy!
Mary, ahoy!
Come to the pictures and register joy,
For it's jolly old Saturday,
Mad-as-a-Hatter-day,
Nothing-much-matter-day-night!

It's Saturday night, I could fight the whole town—
Just say the word and I'll knock a man down.
Monday won't happen again till next week;
You be my soul-mate and I'll be your Sheikh.

Saturday night!
Saturday night!
I'm a rash irresponsible spark;

Let's get a box
Of the two-shilling chocs,
And gobble them up in the dark.
Soul-mate, hullo!
Sheikhy, what-ho!
Come to the pictures and let yourself go,
For it's jolly old Saturday,
Mad-as-a-Hatter-day,
Nothing-much-matter-day-night!

It's Saturday night and I like your new hat;
I'm ready to pop with emotion and that;
I'm fizzy and fiery and fruity and tense,
So let's have a sundae and hang the expense!

Saturday night!
Saturday night!
I want to make Hammersmith hum;

I'm longing to thump
A piano, or jump
Up and down on the top of a drum.
Harriet, Hi!
Light of my eye!
Come to the pictures and have a good cry,
For it's jolly old Saturday,
Mad-as-a-Hatter-day,
Nothing-much-matter-day-night!

ONE OF THE MUGS

Long, long ago, we were taught by our mothers
There's two kinds of people, the Mugs and the Others;
And, since I was promoted from bottles to jugs,
I've known very well that I'm one of the mugs.

I'm one of the mugs. Are you?
I'm diddled whatever I do.
I'm a mug, I'm a mutt, I'm a bathead, a boob,
I buy all the things advertised in the Tube;
Put my shirt on a horse, it lies down on the course.
I'm one of the mugs. Are you?

It's seven to one, if I meet with a stranger,
His little girl's ill and her life is in danger.
His purse has been stolen, his home is at Ryde,
And he's longing to get to the little one's side.

Well, I'm one of the mugs, I know,
But trouble unmans me so;
He's sure to be wearing the old college tie,
So I float him a loan and I kiss him good-bye,
And then I sit down and I have a good cry.
I'm one of the mugs. Are you?

I long for some dashing affair of the heart,
But a dear little dog is my usual part;
I fetch her umbrella and carry her bag,
And my dear little tail has a permanent wag.

I'm one of the mugs, I am,
A poodle, a pet, and a lamb.

For seven long years I've been nice to her mother,
While over my shoulder she ogled another,
And now it turns out what she wants is a brother.
I'm one of the mugs. Are you?

I'm constantly spoiling a Treasury note
For those healthy tobaccos that cure a sore throat,
Those magical systems that double your wits,
And gargles and dopes for the nerves or the nits.

I'm one of the mugs, you see;
They're mainly invented for me.
If you want an infallible thing for the hair,
Just look in the bathroom—they're all of them there,

But you'll notice my innocent belfry is bare.
I'm one of the mugs. Are you?

I'm much in request with old ladies and vicars;
I'm seen a mile off by the confidence-trickers,
And though my finances may leak like a sieve,
It's a comfort to think of the pleasure I give.

I'm one of the mugs, you see;
They're all of them looking for me.
The bookmaker's children are crying for bread,
And they murmur a Thank-you to me if they're fed.
But I wonder, I own—am I really alone?
I'm one of the mugs. Are you?

I CAN'T THINK WHAT HE SEES IN HER

JEALOUSY's an awful thing and foreign to my nature;
I'd punish it by law if I was in the Legislature.
One can't have all of anyone, and wanting it is mean,
But still, there is a limit, and I speak of Miss Duveen.

I'm not a jealous woman,
But I can't *see what he sees in her,*
I can't see what *he sees in her,*
I can't see what he sees *in her!*
If she was something striking
I could understand the liking,
And I wouldn't have a word to say to that;
But I can't see why he's fond
Of that objectionable blonde—
That fluffy little, stuffy little, flashy little, trashy little,
creepy-crawly, music-hally, horrid little CAT!

I wouldn't say a word against the girl—be sure of that;
It's not the creature's fault she has the manners of a rat.
Her dresses may be dowdy, but her hair is always new,
And if she squints a little bit—well, many people do.

I'm not a jealous woman,
But I can't *see what he sees in her,*
I can't see what *he sees in her,*
I can't see what he sees *in her!*
He's absolutely free—
There's no bitterness in me,
Though an ordinary woman would explode;
I'd only like to know
What he sees in such a crow
As that insinuating, calculating, irritating, titivating,
sleepy little, creepy little, sticky little TOAD!

COME TO BRITAIN

A Humble Contribution to the Movement.

Oh, why does New York go to France for its fun
When they might be as jolly in South Kensington ?
Why flock to the Continent ? Surely they know
We've got a whole Continent parked in Soho.

Come to Britain ! for Britain's the best.
It's eleven o'clock, and the nation's at rest.
The curfew is pealing, all's quiet at Ealing,
And no one can say we're offensively gay ;
An income-tax form is the only thing cheap,
But come to Britain and have a good sleep.

Why go to Paris, you travelling swells,
When you've never had fun in our country hotels?
There isn't a bath, and the bell doesn't ring,
But you don't come to Britain for that sort of thing.

Come to Britain! The rooms are so old
And so picturesque that you won't mind the cold.
The bed's over there

and the light's over here;
Don't put out your boots if you want them this year;
The maid has a beard, the cold mutton perspires,
But come to Britain and visit the Shires!

Some of you find that Mentone is dull—
Come over and try a wet Sunday in Hull.
Take luncheon in bed, and get up when you dine,
But order your hot-water bottle for nine.

Come to Britain and lead the gay life !
As a rule it's illegal to bathe with your wife ;

We censor all dramas that mention pyjamas,
But still there's a thrill in our girl-guides at drill;

Then we've swings in the parks, and municipal boats,
So come to Britain and sow your wild oats!

Come to Britain! We've done what we could
To make the place healthy and wholesome and good.
Your whisky will cost you much less in the States,
And here, between drinks, we have tedious waits,
But the Albert Memorial's always on show,
So come to Britain, and let yourselves go!

DON'T BE A TEETOTALLER, DADDY!

Don't be a teetotaller, Daddy!
It never did no one no good.
It'll make you all funny and faddy,
And Mother would hate it, she would.
What happened to Bill when he gave up the beer?
It was Providence working, no doubt—
He rowed on the Thames and was washed down a weir—
I'd rather you knocked us about.

Don't you take up with any treatment, Dad.
You're awful, drunk, but sober you're as bad.

And now we do know what we've got to nurse,
But, stop the drink, it might be something worse.
These temperance-folk have all got horrid vices,
With some it's chocolates, with others ices;
I'd sooner see you reeling down the streets
Than sit like Mr. Lizard, sucking *sweets!*

Don't be a teetotaller, Daddy!
Once start, it's a puzzle to stop.
You'd only go funny and faddy,
And work overtime at the shop.
Remember how Bert threw his whisky away,
And lived on Imperial fruits?
He's a slave to his hot-water-bottle to-day—
I'd rather you slept in your boots.

Say what you like, there's this about the drink,
It makes you talk, instead of only think,
And anything that helps the conversation
Is beneficial to the British nation.
And these teetotallers have dreadful habits—
That Mr. Mole has give his life to *rabbits!*

I'd sooner see you have your little bouts
Than keep white mice or organise the Scouts.

Don't be a teetotaller, Daddy!
You'll never be cheerful no more.
You'll only go funny and faddy,
And give all you've got to the pore.
What happened to Henry, who took the good path,
And joined a No-Alcohol Club?
He reads in his bed and he sings in his bath—
We'd rather you went to the pub.

TRIANGULAR LEGS

I SHOULD not presume to express any view
On the Modernist Movement in Art,
But I've studied the work of Elizabeth Glue,
And this I can say from the heart—
She can do what she please
With her houses and trees
And I shall not attempt to advise,
But I do not believe
That the daughters of Eve
Have such *very* triangular thighs.

No doubt there are women with indigo necks
And heliotrope hips to be found,
But I should have said that the shape of the sex
Was not so much oblong as round;
Paint peonies green
And I see what you mean,
Paint eyes like an ostrich's eggs,
But *is* it the case
That the girls of our race
Have such *very* triangular legs ?

I do not know much of the feminine tribe,
But I've watched one or two in the Tube,
And I've seen very few you could fairly describe
As a couple of squares and a cube;
But that is the view
Of Elizabeth Glue,
And my vision with sympathy swims
When I think of the boobs
Who are married to cubes
With a set of triangular limbs.

Was Sheba the Queen, who made Solomon gape,
A collection of parallel lines ?

Was Juliet just an elliptical shape
With a few geometrical signs ?

Elizabeth Glue,
Give me anything new,
And I'll swallow it down to the dregs,
But *did* Helen of Troy
Run away with the boy
On such *very* triangular legs ?

PLAIN JANE; OR, THE BREAD-WINNER

A Tragedy for Music.

The table set for breakfast. Seated at the table are Miss Jane Surbiton *and the* Rev. Frederick Tate, *agitated.*

Jane. Will you take coffee, Mr. Tate—or tea?
The Rev. Tate. Coffee. Or tea. Or may I have the two?
Well, no, say tea. Say coffee. Well, you see,
I don't want either. All I need is you.

(*Falling on his knees—first one and then the other.*)

Jane! Jane!
Beautiful Jane!
Others may call you plain,
But beauty is hidden in curious shapes;
People have found some attraction in apes;
Some love the lily and some like the leaf,
Some adore mutton and some prefer beef;
Brighton is beautiful, seen from the sea,
And you from all angles are lovely to me,
My Jane! Jane!
Beautiful, beautiful, beautiful, beautiful Jane!
(*They embrace.*)

Enter WINNIE, MRS. SURBITON.

JANE. Dearest Mamma, we are to be united!

MRS. SURBITON. What—before breakfast? Well, I am delighted!

JANE. It's splendid, is it not? But we would rather
That it was you who broke the news to father.

MRS. SURBITON. Your father, child, though he is good and kind,
Is not his best at breakfast, I allow.

JANE. That's very true. But Fred may change his mind.
Waste not a moment, Ma. Tell father *now*.
(*A bellowing, off.*)

MR. GEORGE SURBITON *comes in dressed for the City, but in bedroom slippers, and singing fiercely a stanza from the celebrated hymn to "Bacon and Eggs," in which all join, seated.*

"O breakfast, O breakfast, the meal of my heart!
Bring porridge, bring sausage, bring fish for a start,
Bring kidneys and mushrooms and partridges' legs,
But let the foundation be bacon and eggs.
Bacon and eggs,
Bacon and eggs,
Bring bacon,
Red bacon,
And let there be eggs!"

(*Meanwhile* MR. SURBITON *picks up "The Times," studies it with ill-concealed concern, and, after several explosive snorts, indicates his opinion of the State of Things.*)

Well, I wonder more and more
What the Government is for!
England's going to the dogs,
Both my eggs are cold as frogs,
Things are very, very queer;
Kindly take this down, my dear.

(*He dictates, eating, and* MRS. SURBITON *takes down the following letter to "The Times."*)

To the Editor of "The Times."

SIR, I crave a tiny fraction
Of your valuable space
To record my stupefaction
At the follies of the race.
While the Young with harmful pleasures
Rush regardless to the tomb,
Parliament with mad-cap measures
Hurries on our country's doom.
Frankly, Sir, my view is fervent,
Something must at once be done.
I am, your obedient Servant,
GEORGE ISAIAH SURBITON.

ALL (*with every sign of sympathetic approval*).
What an admirable letter!

JANE. After that he'll feel much better.

MRS. SURBITON. Do you feel better, dear?

MR. SURBITON. I do.

MRS. SURBITON. Then I should like a word with you.

(*She lays a fond caress on* MR. SURBITON'S *head, who receives it with no extravagant enthusiasm.*)

MRS. SURBITON (*wounded*). Have you forgot, my pet,
What day it is to-day ?
It is the day we met,
It is the fifth of May;
It is the day we met,
You kissed me on the pier;
I wore my Whitby jet,
You had hay-fever, dear.
Ah, say I'm not mistaken—
You feel the old, old thrill ?
Turn from your eggs and bacon
And say you love me still.

MR. SURBITON (*shortly*). Quite true.
I do.

(*Aside*) Cursed is the wife who is not able
To curb her passions at the table,
But breakfasts like a billing dove
And mixes marmalade with love !
Will they not learn, have they not read,
Man cannot love till he has fed ?

(*He returns to the Financial Column and his wife to the charge.*)

MRS. SURBITON. And now our daughter Jane,
Sweet replica of you
(She has her father's brain,
She has hay-fever too),
Has on the self-same date
That sealed her father's fate
Selected for her mate
The Reverend Frederick Tate.
Oh, by the recollection
Of twenty years ago,

On their demure affection
Your blessing, George, bestow!

(*But* MR. SURBITON *is lost in the Financial Column*)

MR. SURBITON. "Rice was steady, Lead was easy.
Tin was not in much request,
Jute was feeble, Wool was wheezy,
Copper never looked its best."
And it is just as well, I think,
That all my money is in Zinc——
Coffee, my love?

MRS. SURBITON (*wounded still worse—indeed in anger*).
For twenty years you've trampled me past bearing,
For twenty years not noticed what I say,
For twenty years not seen what I was wearing,
For twenty years forgot my wedding-day——

MR. SURBITON (*passing up his cup, absently*).
Coffee, my dear? It is an odd reflection,
In all the changes of our common lot,
In twenty years of conjugal affection
I never yet have had my coffee hot.

(*He returns to "The Times." She weeps quietly into the coffee.*)

FREDERICK (*in two minds, as usual*).
Well, if this is married life,
Is it wise to take a wife?
Can it be that by degrees
Jane and I will grow like these?
Will she while I break my fast
Lovingly recall the past,
Or, with ill-timed tenderness,
Irritate me while I dress?
Will the flame which now I feel

Dwindle at the morning meal?
Could her kisses ever be
Less to me than kedgeree?

JANE (*stopping the rot, removes him from the table and embraces him*). Kiss me, my love, and let them see
How like some pink anemone
My faithful rock, I cling to thee
For all the world to view.
So never shall this firm embrace
My father's horrid hand unlace,
For he that moves me from my place
Must tear my heart in two.

MRS. SURBITON. Be careful, Jane, for in your conversation,
Much as I sympathise with what you said,
I note a strain of grim determination
Which won't appeal to anyone you wed.

FREDERICK (*nervous*). Angelic Jane, have you forgot
Your dear old father's on the spot?
He has the cash, and we have not,
And that's a point of view.
Though money has no charms for me,
And Love is more than £ *s. d.*,
What I possess would, frankly, be
Inadequate for two.

JANE (*kneels at* MR. SURBITON'S *knee, which he hates —still nervouser*). Listen, listen, father dear,
Before it be too late.
For many a weary, weary year
Your little Jane,
Your plain, sweet Jane,
Has hunted for a mate.

O'er hill and dale the slippery male
I vainly have pursued,
With flattering tongue allured the young,
The older ones with food.
And now that I have caught a man
Oh, let us keep him if we can!
He's in the net,
But even yet
May wriggle through,
So, if you can in any way
Suggest that marriages are gay,
And help me dish
This timid fish,
Dear father, do.

JANE, *her* MOTHER, *and* FREDERICK (*all kneeling, but* FREDERICK *not so heartily*).

Breadwinner, Master of our Fates,
Householder, Payer of the Rates,
Approve these nuptials if you can,
And think yourself a happy man,
Who with a whisper can bestow
The highest bliss that mortals know.

(*They hang upon his words.* MR. SURBITON *is almost moved, but unhappily his eye wanders back to the Financial Column, and he explodes.*)

MR. SURBITON (*waving "The Times" in a frenzy*).

Dogs and devils! what d'you think?
The bottom's dropping out of Zinc!
Zinc is falling,
Zinc's appalling,

Zinc is in a dreadful state;
Zinc is crumbling,
Zinc is tumbling,
Zinc is down to twenty-eight!
I think we'll sink with zinc, my dove—
Is this a time to talk of *love?*
Give me my boots!
Where are my boots?
Give me my *boots*!
Where are my BOOTS?
All is up!
The taxi toots—
One more cup!
The engine hoots,
All is up!
The beasts, the brutes!
One more cup!
Where are my BOOTS?

ALL. All is up, etc.

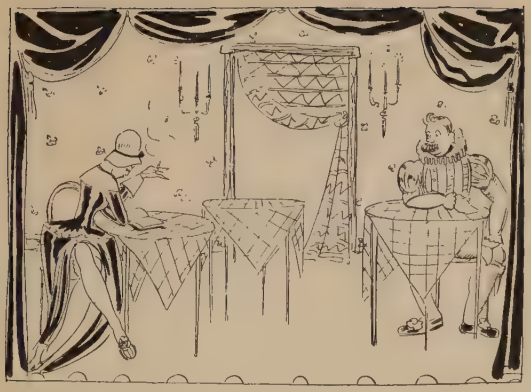
(*Full orchestra agitato, while* MRS. SURBITON *prepares coffee and her daughter hunts boots.*)

THE REV. TATE (*philosophises apart*).
Well, if this is married life,
Man is mad to take a wife!
Also, it occurs to me,
What about heredity?
These two parents, I confess,
Magnetise me less and less;
Am I then to plight my troth
With one that has the faults of both?

Money was their only merit,
This, it seems, she won't inherit.
Fare you well, my dearest Jane,
We must never meet again.
I'll think of you—so do not cry—
But as a sister, Jane. Good-bye.

[MR. SURBITON, *booted at last, rushes from the house with* FREDERICK, *both pausing at the door to sing* Farewell! *In this splendid chord the women join. They are then left weeping, and quite right too.*

CURTAIN.



TWO GENTLEMEN OF SOHO

(It now appears that Shakespeare is best when played in modern clothes. Perhaps the themes of modern life would be better dressed in Shakespearean costume. Some may think this play wordy, but then there are brutes who think Shakespeare wordy. There is an acting version, shorter certainly, but much less beautiful.)

CHARACTERS:

THE DUCHESS OF CANTERBURY.
LADY LÆTITIA (*her daughter*).
HUBERT (*her dancing partner*).
LORD WITHERS.
TOPSY.
SNEAK (*a private detective*).
PLUM (*a public detective*).
A WAITER.

SCENE.—*A Night-Club. Three tables. The middle table empty.* TOPSY *reading a book at Table One.* PLUM, *suspicious, at Table Three. Music in the ballroom, off.*

PLUM. Ho, girl, look up! A goblet of champagne?
TOPSY. I thank you, no. Indeed, 'tis after hours.
(*Returns to book.*)

PLUM (*downcast, aside*).

I am an officer from Scotland Yard,
Dressed in the likeness of an English lord,
And night by night, while seven weeks swung by,
Have I to this lewd haunt made pilgrimage
In search of some irregularity,
Cheating an entrance with a lusty lie
(But all's forgiven in a noble cause),
Sometimes disguiséd as a gentleman,
And sometimes in the costume of a virgin.

But nothing happens. I have offered bribes,
I have been suppliant for sweet wine or opium
After the hours by Parliament provided,

But like the fabulous Mongolian drop
Of water on strong rock for ever falling,
I have made no impression. I believe
There is no falsehood practised here but mine,
There is no jot nor tittle of the law
By these respectable impostors broken.
Well, this is hard. Only the dear old Duchess
Has with my bitterness some sweet compounded
Of nimble dances and beguiling looks,
But she engagèd with Another is.
So, gentle Sleep, upon my eyelids press,
And let me wake to catch some wickedness.
(*Sleeps—Music.*)

Enter LADY LÆTITIA *and* LORD WITHERS. *They sit at Table Two.*

LÆTITIA. What is this place?
WITHERS. My dear Lætitia,

I do misdoubt I do it too much honour,
And you too little, by this introduction.
It is a night-club. You have seen a stone
Turned by a ploughman on the hills of Kent,
And the foul creeping many-legged things
Which dart from under, blinking in the light ?
So from this den snatch suddenly the lid
Between the midnight and the milkman's hour,
You will see slink and scutter about Soho
The very dregs and sediment of London:
Here the hot cits of Wimbledon and Streatham
With busy rakes from Kensington combine
In obscene alchemy to make the night
One long invention in debauchery,
Wine, women, drugs——

LÆTITIA. In that case, Algernon,
Pardon my *ab*surd curiosity,
But what is't brings you to this hell-hole ?

WITHERS. Well,
I am a writer, and as some physician,
Searching the secrets of the human body,
Doth not the healthy but the sick pursue,
And is more happy 'midst unique distempers,
Growths, fevers, tumours, abscesses and boils,
Than with the strong and undefilèd flesh,
So in the study of these diseasèd minds
Do I seek knowledge not to be explorèd
In the dull wits of the respectable,
Sucking a sweetness from the poisoned flower,
And like the wombat savouring the cheese
When 'tis corrupted——

LÆTITIA. Well, I cannot say
That I see any signs of dissipation.

WITHERS (*indicates* TOPSY *and* PLUM).

Mark then this lout, which in a rustic stupor
Is dead till morning, when it swills again.
Mark too this maiden that with Vestal eye
Seems to see nothing but the book she reads not—
Here's what they call a woman of the half-world,
That is, she is not one thing nor the other,
Dubs herself " dancing partner," and for hire
She will with any pursy sot that offers
Waltz, fox-trot, Charleston—the whole catalogue
Of modern antics—and the evening through,
Will counterfeit with some strange stockbroker
A mercenary satisfaction. Pah!
(*Observes dancers, off.*)
And yet some follies may adorn the young
Which to the old must be disfigurement.
How yonder matron wallows in the dance,

A loaded waggon creaking down the hill
Of years and adiposity! The traffic
Bounds and rebounds unheeded from her flanks,
Or, pausing careless in her path, is crushed.
And on her breast is like a pendant hung
A slim, fair, pallid and perspiring youth
That smiles and smiles and smiles, and is in torture.
How like a milit'ry balloon she looks
That is entangled in an aspen-tree!
Do you not think so, dear?

LÆTITIA. That is my mother.

WITHERS. Is't so? So 'tis!

LÆTITIA. And that *her* dancing partner!

WITHERS. I never saw her here before, Lætitia!
These hands should quicker have torn out these eyes
Than these harsh lips have spoken, or these legs
Have carried me to these conclu-si-ons!

LÆTITIA. It is not easy to avoid Mamma,
On summer evenings she is everywhere.
There is no saxophone doth not salute her
With other mothers rounder than herself,
Like baby elephants that after twilight
Jump in the jungle.

WITHERS. 'Tis the Age of Age.

LÆTITIA. How true! Age will be served, and this pale youth
Must for a salary (how much I know not)
The nightly partner of her gambols be.
O me, 'tis pitiful to see one's mother
Go to the dogs!

WITHERS. Weep not, Lætitia,
But let us have a dry Martini. Ho!

Enter a WAITER. PLUM *wakes up.*

PLUM. This is a Viscount, and I never saw
A lord that did not love to break the law.
(*Watches.*)

WITHERS. Pluck me ten berries from the juniper,
And in a beaker of strong barley-spirit
The kindly juices of the fruit compress.
This is our Alpha. Next clap on your wings,
Fly south for Italy, nor come you back
Till in the cup you have made prisoner
Two little thimblefuls of that sweet syrup
The Romans call Martini. Pause o'er Paris
And fill two eggshells with the French Vermouth.
Then home incontinent, and in one vessel
Cage your three captives, but in nice proportions,
So that no one is master, and the whole
Sweeter than France, but not so sweet as Italy.
Wring from an orange two bright tears, and shake,
Shake a long time the harmonious trinity,
Then in two cups like angels' ears present them,
And see there swims an olive in the bowl,
Which when the draught is finished shall remain
Like some sad emblem of a perished love.
This is our Omega. Go, fellow!

WAITER. Sir,
It is too late. I cannot serve you.

PLUM. Damn!
(*Music; exit* WAITER.)

WITHERS. O that in England might be born a Man,

Sprung from the loins of English liberty,
To rise and sweep, twice daily, like old Thames,
In a strong tide 'gainst petty tyrannies,
And though at evening he be beaten back,
Flood in at morning to clean the channel again
Of busy women, and suck out to sea
Bans, prohibitions, interferences,
Movements, Societies, Government Departments,
Such as curtail, diminish, and cut down
The antique privilege of true-born Englishmen
To take their pleasure in what way they please,
When, how, which, where, whatever, and with whom! (*Chord.*)
Was it for this I joined the Infantry
And took up arms against a Continent
To have my eating and my drinking times
Fixed by old maids and governed by policemen?
[PLUM, *with dignity, passes out to ball-room.*
I think, were Germany the master here,
We should, at least, be certain of our beer.
But see, the Duchess finds new company,
In age and form more fitter to her own!

LÆTITIA. It is the fellow who was here asleep.

WITHERS. Then I have wronged him, for the man is sober.

LÆTITIA. He would not else have undertaken Mother.

Enter HUBERT, *exhausted, and mopping brow. He sinks into chair beside* TOPSY, *who sits up and takes notice.*

WITHERS. And here, like some slim carrack long distressed
In the rough storm and tempest of the ocean,

Comes the frail consort of her voyaging,
His sails awrack, his rigging in disorder,
And the proud pennant drooping at the peak!
Thankful he creeps into the nearest port,
Nor is there barge, punt, fishing-boat so humble
He will not gladly berth beside her.

TOPSY. Sir,
You are distempered, and your breathing labours,
As I have seen some baby grampus pant
After a heavy supper. Why is this?

HUBERT. Oh, it were better to be bound with vipers
To the great stone of Sisyphus, and roll
All day for ever up and down the hill,
Than to be fastened to a human mountain
Aping the antics of an early lamb!
For one is punishment, pure, unmistaken,
But this—this is the sacrilege of Pleasure,
I do a treason to my youth, I am
Not Sisyphus, not Tantalus, but both!
It were enough to caper with a whale,
Or spin a waltz with a rhinoceros,
But to be jostled in the dance by fairies,
Young, unattainable, locked i' the arms
Of men not better but more blest than I am,
And on their soft and tantalising lips
See the slow smile that mocks my servitude—
This is my torture and damna-ti-on!

(*Is overcome.*)

TOPSY. Be easy, Sir. This is my own employment.
I too must foot it and be gay for gold
With such as can get nobody for nothing.

HUBERT. Aye, but with many. I am bound to one.

TOPSY. Life is a most extraordinary thing.

HUBERT. Man, like a pebble on a glacier,
Moves imperceptibly but always down.
TOPSY. Life is a looking-glass, in which we see
Only the dull reflection of ourselves,
And every day 'tis less attractive.
HUBERT. Come,
This is no time for dismal metaphor!
My monster's busy—while I have the chance,
Come, fellow-slave, console me in the dance!
(*They get up, get out, and get off. Music.*)
WITHERS. I think between them there's a seed of love
Which shall grow up into a goodly tree. (*Kneels.*)
And you, Lætitia, so frosty-proud,
Like to those castles of cold loveliness
Which scare the shipping on the North Atlantic,
So that old Captains sniff the sky and mutter:
"There is an iceberg sixty miles away."
Hushed are the passengers, and no more now
The merry quoit rings lightly on the deck,
But when the wonder bursts upon the view,
Fear is forgotten—O Lætitia,
You are so beautiful that I am bold,
And dare defy the miracle with wooing.
Will you not swim a moment in the sun
Of my affection—from the Arctic waters
Of dumb indifference drift southward soon,
Hang in the middle latitudes, and then
Melt into matrimony? Oh, I know
'Tis not the mode to speak of marrying,
And this warm sentiment which now inflames me
Is but a mock and madness to the young.
No more the sweet confusions of the simple,
Rings, tokens, pledges, clutchings of the hands,

Partings and moons and memories are holy—
Nay, I have heard some yearling split his sides
At roses clustered round a cottage door
Or the fond statement of a negro's passion.
For now is devotion the stale jest of fools,
And that wild ecstasy the poets sang
Is but a livelihood and theme for doctors,
Policemen, clowns, and psycho-analysts,
While he that boldly on his knees professes
A fixed affection for a single person
Calls down the cackle of the continents.
Yet, though to speak these shameful syllables
Names me a Ninny, feeble in the mind,
In soul suburban—*Will you marry me?*

LÆTITIA. I am too much upset about my dam.
I think I shall not marry anyone,
But take my mother to a nunnery,
And there, with a little needlework, convert her
From the vain fancies of the world—but look!
I would not have her see me. Let us fetch
A circuit to the ball-room, and from there
Play spy to the event.

WITHERS. It shall be so.
[*They go off, right.*

Enter, left, the DUCHESS, *with* PLUM. *Fairy music.*

PLUM. I hope, Your Grace, I have not wearied you?

DUCHESS. There are the wings of swallows on your feet,
And in your arms the potency of lions.
It is not dancing when I dance with you,
I have no mind, no body, I am nothing
But a swift ghost that soars a prisoner
In the embraces of a flying bear.

PLUM. It is a pleasure to give satisfaction.
DUCHESS. Are you a member ?
PLUM. Duchess, I am not.
DUCHESS. Then with what member—nay, in this poor house
What member moves with such a dignity,
Hath such a grace and nimbleness of wit,
That he dare vouch for such a visitor ?
PLUM. I did not come with any, but alone.
DUCHESS. Is not a member, yet alone he came——
Strange !

Enter SNEAK, *cloaked and masked. Chord.*

SNEAK (*darkly, apart*).
So. She's here. And this gross gentleman
Should be that paramour my daughter spoke of,
The constant prop of ducal indiscretion.
I will lie close and watch the giddy scene.
Waiter !
WAITER. What would you ?

SNEAK. I am a detective——
Nay, do not tremble !—not His Majesty's,
But the sworn servant of an Agency
Skilled to pursue, see, tabulate, record,
And in the courts most cunningly describe
All the sly naughtiness of faithless wives,
Or peccant husbands, as the case may be,
Looks, nods, and greetings, holding-on of hands
After the space by decency commanded,
Meetings and partings, secret matinées,
The sigh drawn upward or the blinds drawn down,
Gifts, letters, notes—but are you listening ?
WAITER. Ay.
SNEAK. Well, His Grace the Duke of Canterbury
Hath of our house requirèd information
Touching the acts, deeds, conduct, and behaviour
Of that loose elephant he calls his wife.
Whether in truth he doth suspect her virtue,
Whether the wish was father to the thought,
And the old dog would find some cause for parting
Such as himself he doth not dare to furnish,
I cannot tell you. But I do persever,
Here is the reason, cause, and circumstance
Why I sit here instead of somewhere else,
And now that all lies naked as the noon
In the hot deserts of Australia,
Nor doth one leaf of artful stratagem,
Lies, counterfeit, deception, subterfuge,
Ingenious accent or oblique suggestion
O'er the bare truth project one inch of shadow,
And if there be a person here alive
Who doth not now know better than his mother

My name, my calling, and my secret business,
Then it were better for the loon to be
Boiled in ammonia till his wits return——
Well, if all's clear, known, plain, and manifest,
Then there is nothing I would say but this,
What *I* should like would be a spot of whisky.

PLUM (*hearing, characteristically, last line only, pricks up ears*). Now surely shall some misdemeanour follow!

DUCHESS. They say the antelope on summer nights
Halts at the margin of the stream to drink.

PLUM. Fellow, we thirst! Bring port and lemonade!

WAITER. God made the lemon and the grape together,
But Man, milady, has divided them,
And at this hour, by our wise Parliament,
The lemon's lawful, but the grape's a crime.

DUCHESS (*unstrung*).
What is this talk of Parliaments and lemons?
Am I a Duchess, to be fed on *lemons?*
Was there not somebody who *died* of lemons?
Did none arrest him nor none prosecute?
Is there no law against excessive lemons,
Or too much sugar or intemperate tea,
Or the vile craving for hot-water-bottles?
What! Lemons? Parliaments? As I'm a Duchess,
Bring me the article!

WAITER (*cowed*). It shall be done.
(*Takes bottle of port from pocket and places on table.*)

PLUM. Ho! Bar the doors! Sound the alarm without! [*Exit* WAITER.
Let none make entrance or emergencies!

Enter instantly LÆTITIA, LORD WITHERS, TOPSY, *and* HUBERT.

WITHERS. What's here ?
LÆTITIA. How ?
TOPSY. So !
HUBERT. What is't ?
SNEAK. Ha !
DUCHESS. Who are you, sir ?
PLUM. I am the Metropolitan Police,
And this my warrant. Let a trumpet sound.
(*Chord.*)

DUCHESS. O viper !
HUBERT. Judas !
LÆTITIA. Mother !
DUCHESS. Oh, my daughter ! (*Sobs.*)
PLUM. Oh, it is anguish for a horse to suffer
The opposing reins of office and affection
Which right and left distract the tender mind !
But this no Englishman has done, nor shall—

Make duty servant to his inclinations.
Take you these papers and at once write down
Your names and callings, titles, dignities,
Estates and mansions, orders, decorations,
Whether in wedlock you be joined or no,
How many children, houses, wives, convictions,
With all such details and appendages
As shall be pertinent. And in the morning
At Bow Street presently make apparition.
Now to your homes go softly.

DUCHESS. Oh, the shame!

HUBERT. I will not!

WITHERS. Insolent!

LÆTITIA. My mother!

SNEAK. HOLD!

PLUM. Who's this that rudely doth resist the tide
Of our proceedings?

SNEAK. I am a detective,
Now by the Duke of Canterbury charged
To see, watch, notice, and at dawn discover
The nightly conduct of this noblewoman——

DUCHESS. Now open, Earth, and hide me!

SNEAK. "Sneak," said he,
"Good, honest Sneak, if you have any skill
Or any pity for a poor old man,
Find me that snake and serpent in the grass
Which hath drawn off my Duchess from her duty,
So that in naughtiness and vain delights
She doth dishonour the evening of our days
And utterly neglects the housekeeping—
Find me this worm, good Sneak, that I may split
him!"

Thus the old Duke, with bloody fearful oaths,
Cleaning a pistol by his lonely bed,
Or whetting some great knife upon a stone;
And thus at daybreak shall I answer him.
" Duke, he is found, your ravisher of homes,
Snake in the grass and cuckoo in the nest,
A little, round, unpleasant, portly thing
Which crawls, part trespasser and part policeman,
Into the childish revels of the rich,
Toys with their wives and tramples on their toes,
Eats of their salt, and presently arrests them
For some sly spinster's quibble in the law,
And while he smiles contaminates the air
With artful ruse and mean suspi-ci-on,
Will call for wine to catch a flunkey out,
And drink with women only to denounce them——
This, Duke, is he that, doubly double-faced,
Has the pure spirit of your wife corrupted,
Night after night entwinèd in the dance,
Which I with evidence can justify,
This scheming, slow, constabulary lump,
This is your libertine and co-respondent——"

PLUM (*enraged, takes truncheon from trousers*). Peace, caitiff!

SNEAK. Ha!

PLUM. Thou dog of Houndsditch!

DUCHESS. Oh!

(*They fight. Hurry Music.*)

SNEAK. What, bully?

PLUM. Sot!

SNEAK. Hog!

PLUM. Bastard!

DUCHESS. Oh! I swoon!

SNEAK. Ah, would you ?
WITHERS. Peace !
LÆTITIA. O gentlemen !
PLUM. Die, villain !

(SNEAK *dies. Chord.*)

TOPSY (*prostrates self on body of* SNEAK).

O Sir, you have killed my father ! Why was this ?
I had no life, no being, but in him,
And now he's not I am not neither. Oh !
(*Dies of grief. Chord.*)

HUBERT (*kneels beside body of* TOPSY).

O Topsy, Topsy, could you not have waited?
I did not think that you would leave me thus,
Without one word nor tender beckoning
To bid me follow you. Yet I will follow,
And make one date of all eternity.

(*Strikes self on head with truncheon and dies. Chord.*)

PLUM. This was an issue not to be expected.

WITHERS. Yet I have heard some countryman remark,

Clapping the swallows from a field of corn:
" It is not seldom in the course of nature,
After a drought, not in light showers only
Falls and descends the gentle rain of Heaven,
But in a spate and tempest——"

PLUM. But what's here?

DUCHESS (*kneeling*).

Now, Earth, receive me, for I die of shame!

WITHERS (*apart*). What does this bode?

LÆTITIA. She spoke of death.

WITHERS. I heard her.
LÆTITIA. This must be hindered.
WITHERS. Ay.
PLUM. But mark what follows!
DUCHESS. Farewell to revelry, farewell the dance,
And the gay trappings of my second youth!
Farewell the music, and, sweet saxophone,
Thou art not music, yet I wish thee well,
With all late suppers and hot gala-nights,
The coloured streamer and the blue balloon,
Fans, rattles, dolls, and india-rubber dogs,
And wicked kippers eaten in the dawn,
And those fierce rhythmic and delicious tunes
Which light a fever in the veins and set
The feet, the soul, fermenting—fare you well!
Oh, it is selfish in the Young to grudge us
The little joys of our declining days!
Have they not Love and Happiness their servants?
And must all Pleasure bow to them as well?
This were ungenerous. And I think in Heaven,
If there be saxophones as well as harps,
They are not only for the Young. But here
I shall not see a gala-night again.
(*Dies of shame. Fairy music.*)
LÆTITIA. Oh, she is dead!
WITHERS. Life, like a butterfly,
Hath from the window of this flesh departed.
I think I never did nor never shall
See any woman so impeccable.
She was a person of extreme distinction.
She had discretion, grace, nobility,
Beauty and strength, taste, wit, intelligence,

Was kind to animals, by children worshipped;
I think I never saw a woman——

LÆTITIA. Peace!

Mother, shall any other lips but mine
Tell the long catalogue of your great virtues?
I was your child, and if in anything
From the straight furrow of the good you strayed,
I do accuse myself. I should have told you
The snares and dangers of this wicked world,
And nursed you always with a daughter's love.
For you were too much guarded in your youth,

And knew not everything, as we know now,
Who by experience of all temptation
Against temptation are inoculated;
But you, poor innocent, were an easy prey;
The first shrill saxophone that squeaked in London
Was your undoing. And where'er you be,
Whether 'tis harps or saxophones or timbrels
That now make mischief in your neighbourhood,

You shall not face that music quite alone.

(*Dies of remorse. Chord.*)

WITHERS. Thou too, Lætitia, art thou dead ?

PLUM. She is.

WITHERS. Then there is no more virtue in the world,
Fire hath no heat, and the congealèd sun
Swims like a frozen orange in the sky,
There is not any meaning anywhere,
And to no purpose the great stars revolve !
Oh, my dear Tish, unique Lætitia,
I will not in this wilderness delay,
Where, without you, I am the one thing living,
Like some lone seaman left upon an island,
Who beats his head against an emptiness
And so goes mad. Give me the knife ! I die.

(*Stabs self and dies. Chord.*)

PLUM. This is a most strange consequence and finish
Of one quite simple action—— Ho ! Without !

Enter WAITER.

Where are the officers of this Society?

WAITER. Sir, they are drinking.

PLUM. Then disturb them not,
But with all speed call ministers and surgeons.
Reverently then these bodies disentangle,
And in two chambers decently dispose them,
Not in one vague and ill-considered heap,
As men store pheasants, cock and hen together,
But with due awe distinguishing the sexes.
And this poor body, which shall top the pile,
Cause in a cylinder to be cremated
Not far from Winchester, where I was born.
This is the end. Go, fellow! I have done.

WAITER. Sir, from my birth I was a nervous child,
This way and that swung weakly by suggestion,
And could not see my fellow-creatures weep
But I must echo them with noisy tears.
Speak of an earthquake, and I fly the house,
Hang o'er the bulwarks, I am sick myself.
And now, i' the presence of these diminished figures,
By their own act, I take it, brought to nought,
I feel the prickings of mortality.
Thoughts of destruction, fatal inclinations,
Throng in my arteries——

PLUM. It is enough.
I see far off the goal to which you stumble.
Die and have done with it, for I am waiting.

(WAITER *knocks head thrice on floor and dies. Chord.*)

PLUM. Now do the morning and the evening meet

To kiss the midnight in the noon of death.

(*Stabs self. Music.*)

Now is the circle of our questionings
Completed in an equilateral triangle,
Whereof like children in a labyrinth
At the perimeter we wander dumbly
Groping for truth, nor can one path discover
Which is not soon concluded in a point
That hath not magnitude, nor space, nor nothing,
But down the windy parallels of Time
Echoes again that interrogative
Which mocked our entrances. Now, Plum, go off!

(*Stabs self.*)

Now shall the night-hawk to the trees report,
" Plum is no more, poor Plum, that used to hang
High in the branches of authority,
Poor Plum is fallen from the bough unripened,
Shook off too soon by unkind circumstance."

(*Stabs self.*)

Now Popes and persons, majesties and powers,
Dominions, sunsets, Kings and macaroons,
Violets, marigolds, and moonlight falling
Like children's kisses on the mountain-top,

(*Stabs self.*)

Dukes, ferns, and shell-fish, and all gentle things
In the high argument of love suspended,
Firelight at evening and the dawn of day,
Red wings and walnuts, oak, mahogany,
Lancaster, York, great Salisbury, and Monmouth,
Hereford, Leicester, Northumberland, and Kent,
King's Cross, St. Pancras, Euston, Waterloo—
All noble-sounding and capacious words,

Come and be mourners at my funeral,
For I am in the vestibule of death, (*Stabs self.*)

This is the gate and portal of my ending,
I think there doth not any word remain,
But silence and still quiet touch my lips
With the mute harmony of things unspoken.
I never was of that loud company
Which seek their harvest in a waste of words;
" Do " was my dictionary. And my sword
Leaped from the sheath ere I could mention it.
(*Stabs self.*)

As you may see in some great orchestra,
A little lonely fellow at the end
Sits by the cymbals, and the instruments
Thunder around him their tempestuous din,
Flutes, horns, and oboes, harp, and clarinet,
And the wild fiddles like the forest swaying
On Swedish mountains when the storm is high.
But he, that could with one most royal clash

Startle the city, and make all that music
Like the small twittering of birds appear,
Sits with his brasses, but doth make no sound
Till the conductor shall command him so,
And leaves his cymbals and goes home at last,
Still with no sound, nor kindly thanks, nor notice,
For the conductor hath forgotten him—
So sit I here, and die without a word.

(*Stabs self, and surveys scene.*)

Well, this will puzzle them at Scotland Yard.

(*Dies. Chord.*)

CURTAIN.

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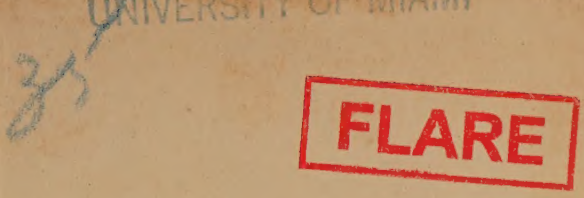

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